



(U) What We Can Learn from 'Play Station,' Grooming Leaders, and More: An Interview with [REDACTED]

FROM: SIGINT Communications  
Unknown  
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(U//FOUO) In our continuing series of interviews with SID leaders, SIDtoday talked to [REDACTED] Chief of [Information-Sharing Services](#) (S12):

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- (U) What is the most exciting project for the future that your organization is working on?

(S) There are so many, it's hard to choose just one. One thing I foresee is that we'll streamline the way we issue multimedia reports -- multimedia files should be embedded within the textual reports when they are first released, rather than added after the fact, as is the current situation.

(U//FOUO) Regarding SIGINT reporting, I'm also interested in developing a vision of the future, but not one so exotic that we can't achieve it. What I have in mind is this: **we need to get a better idea of how people absorb information that is new or alien to them.** For example, if you ever watch young people using a Play Station, you will see that they are able to immediately observe and act upon all of the data that is bombarding them from every corner of the screen as they play the game. By contrast, if I try to play the game, most of the information displayed means nothing to me and goes right past me in a blur!

(U//FOUO) I think there's a lot we could do to engage with industry in planning for this new generation of intelligence professionals, to understand how to most effectively get information across to a customer, and to plan out a way ahead. We're still in the talking stage about this, but I'm hopeful that we'll be able to push ahead with this in the coming months.

- (U) What is the biggest challenge facing your organization right now?

(U//FOUO) As of now, we're pushing hard to speed up the delivery of JOURNEYMAN. [Note: [JOURNEYMAN](#) is a major program designed to improve the way NSA delivers SIGINT to its customers, moving beyond the legacy systems in use today.] The problem is one of too much red tape hindering its progress. In the past, NSA has taken a strict view of acquisition, slowed down by the need to conform to numerous DOD requirements. Now NSA is working with our overseers to try to get more flexibility into the system, while still having accountability. As it is now, the red tape is cumbersome and delays the rollout of new systems.

- (U) What was your first job at the agency?

(U//FOUO) I was a computer geek! I programmed the "CIVORG" and "TELE" M204 computer system databases in the old A4 organization.

- (U) What is the most memorable experience you've had during your career?

(U//FOUO) "Memorable" is a relative term - my experiences in the computer world might not compare with some of the stories our military colleagues could tell! In any case, I remember working with a great team on the development of ORCHESTRA and ROSECROSS. I had dealings with top NSA management for the first time, as we argued for the cancellation of the MINSTREL program. Everyone from that team is still here at NSA, and we developed good relationships that continue to this day, with people on both sides of the argument.

- (U) If you could change one thing at the Agency, what would it be?

(U//FOUO) In my view, we need to do a better job of **singling out and grooming our future leaders.** Under the FERS program, there isn't as much incentive for people to stay on at NSA for their whole career, so there's the danger that talented employees will leave the Agency before

we recognize their leadership potential. What qualities are we looking for? Well, people who can identify an objective and move towards it, people with common sense, people who can see the bigger picture and who have the right personality for the job.

(U//FOUO) What about hiring leaders from outside NSA? Well, we've had success bringing in and retaining GS-14s and GS-15s, but we've been less successful in hiring and retaining senior executives. It may be hard for them to adapt to the government's way of doing things, just as we might find it challenging to switch to the private industry environment. In any case, there will always be a need for people who "grew up" in the organization and understand the NSA culture.

(U) To new employees who want to make a career at NSA, and be a leader, I recommend that you take matters into your own hands: **find an experienced, savvy person to guide you in your career progression.**

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(U) *See other recent interviews on SIDtoday:*

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[\(S//SI\) Is NSA Going Deaf? What Is "Golf Cart Reporting"? -- An Interview With MENA's](#) [REDACTED]

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